

TOP SECRET
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

20 May 1967

OSD DECLASSIFICATION/RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS ON FILE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

Considerable controversy surrounds our current program of bombing North Vietnam. Several alternatives have been suggested. The two most promising appear to be:

I. Concentrate the bombing of North Vietnam on the lines of communication in the Panhandle Area (Route Sectors I, II, and III) and terminate bombing in the remainder of North Vietnam unless there occurs reconstruction of important fixed targets which have been destroyed by prior raids or unless new military activities appear.

II. Terminate the bombing of fixed targets not directly associated with LOCs in Route Sectors VIa and VIb and simultaneously expand the armed reconnaissance operations in those Sectors by authorizing strikes on all LOCs, excepting only those in an eight-mile circle around the center of Hanoi and an eight-mile circle around the center of Haiphong. This program would undoubtedly require continuous strikes against MIG aircraft on all airfields. Further, the program should be examined under two alternative assumptions in one of which strikes against ports and port facilities are precluded and in the other of which every effort is made to deny importation from the sea. (This latter program is essentially that recommended in JCSM-286-67 dated May 20.)

As a basis for determining the future course of the bombing in the North, I should like to ask each of you to analyze the two alternatives outlined above and any others you consider worth discussing. Such analyses should examine the extent to which the proposed bombing pattern will reduce the flow of men and materiel to the South, affect the losses of U.S. pilots and aircraft, and affect the risk of increased military or political pressure from the Soviet Union and/or Red China.

I believe it would be wise for each of the four addressees to carry out their studies independently of each other. I hope it will be possible for you to complete your reports by June 1.

Robert S. McNamara
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See Def Cont Nr. X-3086